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ABSTRACT

This manual has been developed to assist school districts in Michigan in their efforts to retain students who have made vocational education choices that are nontraditional for their sex. The manual provides school districts with four alternative ways of supporting nontraditional vocational education students: (1) nontraditional student club; (2) team support system; (3) peer counseling; and (4) adult mentors and nontraditional role models. Each of these four approaches is introduced by an abstract and requirements for implementing the activity. All materials for developing the approach follow the introductory page. Contains 10 references. (KC)

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ED 408 478

ALTERNATIVE SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR NONTRADITIONAL STUDENTS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Michigan Department of Education
Office for Sex Equity in Education

Revised 1995

CE 074 280

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION i

1 - NONTRADITIONAL STUDENT CLUB 1

- Sample Invitation 5
- Sample Agenda - First Meeting 6
- Get Acquainted Activity 7
- Interest Survey For Students 8
- Sample Agenda - Second Meeting 10
- Recommended Videotapes 11

2 - TEAM SUPPORT SYSTEM 12

- Sample Letter to Potential Team Leaders 16
- Duties of The Team Leader 17
- Student Survey 19

3 - PEER COUNSELING 21

- Sample Memo to Teachers 25
- Sample Letter to Nontraditional Students 26
- First Meeting Agenda 27
- Second Peer Counseling Meeting 28
- Subsequent Meetings - Outline 29
- Nontraditional Student Survey 31
- Peer Counseling Program: Evaluation For 33

4 - ADULT MENTOR/NONTRADITIONAL ROLE MODEL 35

- Sample Newspaper Article 38
- Interview Questions 40
- Discussion/worksheet Questions 41

BIBLIOGRAPHY 43

The original 1983 manuscript was researched and prepared by
Jan Foster, former Head Consultant of Special Projects Services.
Revisions for 1995 prepared by Betty Simonds, Sex Equity Coordinator.

INTRODUCTION

In the past few years, emphasis has been placed on equity in vocational education. Females and males have been encouraged to consider vocational education programs which are nontraditional for their gender. When students do enroll in nontraditional vocational programs, problems, barriers, frustrations and resentments may arise for students, as well as teachers, because of the "newness" of the situation, resulting in the student dropping out of the program.

Research has shown that often nontraditional students experience a greater feeling of insecurity than traditional students. These insecure feelings may be caused by disproportionate enrollments (where more than 75% of the class are of the other gender), which tend to make the nontraditional student feel isolated. The nontraditional student may well be asking, "How will members of the class accept me?" or "Will I lose my femininity or masculinity?"

One way teachers, counselors, and administrators can be sensitive to these concerns of the nontraditional student and at the same time balance vocational enrollments is to develop support systems to help retain the nontraditional vocational students they already have.

This manual has been developed to assist districts in their efforts to retain students who have made vocational education choices which are nontraditional for their sex. The manual provides school districts with four alternative ways of supporting nontraditional vocational education students:

1. Nontraditional Student Club
2. Team Support System
3. Peer Counseling
4. Adult Mentor/Nontraditional Role Model

Each of these four approaches is introduced by a title page with a brief abstract and requirements for implementation. All materials for developing the approach follow the introductory title page.

Should you use any one or all of these approaches for which material or consultation would be useful, feel free to contact the Office for Community Enrichment at (517) 373-3260. Our services and materials are provided free of charge. Should your building select and carry out an approach which is well received by staff and students, let us know. We're always eager to share ideas with other buildings and school districts across the state.

1 - NONTRADITIONAL STUDENT CLUB

Abstract

The formation of an actual club or group whose members meet regularly for educational, social, and/or supportive purposes. The packet contains instructions for recruiting members, developing a club, and organizing meetings. This approach can be highly successful because students help author the activities to meet their needs.

Depending on the members' interests, the Nontraditional Student Club's activities can take many different directions. The support alternatives of Peer Counseling, Team Support System, and Adult Mentors, also included in this manual, could readily be incorporated as group activities.

Participants

1. Club Sponsor
2. Nontraditional Vocational Education Students

Time Required to Initially Implement: Three Weeks

Ongoing Time Required: By choice of the group

Introduction

Nontraditional students often feel isolated and need to be supported for choosing to do something different. Because of their schedules they are often neither aware of, nor ever come into contact with, other nontraditional students in their own school. The formation of a club or group of nontraditional students from all vocational areas is an excellent method of providing student support and affording them extra educational and social activities. Because schools already have many different types of social, service and educational clubs in operation, creating a new group that competes for membership with other organizations and events will take some time and special planning to get underway. Do not get discouraged if there is a small attendance at the first few meetings!

The following material outlines the steps to start a Nontraditional Student Club in your school.

Find a Sponsor

The club sponsor is an adult in the system who has some awareness of the special needs of nontraditional students, and who is able and willing to assume leadership.

Duties of the Sponsor

1. Identify nontraditional students in all vocational areas of the school. This can be done by requesting a list of such students from the Director of Vocational Education, guidance counselors, Department Heads or individual teachers.

2. Establish a meeting time, date, and place for the first meeting.

3. Invite potential members to the first meeting (Sample Invitation - Attachment 1-A).

4. Announce the meeting in the daily bulletin or morning announcements.

5. Conduct the meeting. The following attachments have been designed to help you get the first meeting off the ground.

   Attachment 1-B - Sample agenda for first meeting
   Attachment 1-C - Get acquainted activity
   Attachment 1-D - Student survey - designed to allow member input into future meeting times and types of activities they'd like
   Attachment 1-E - Sample agenda for second meeting
   Attachment 1-F - Recommended films

Keep the Group Visible

Once the club is meeting on a regular basis, work toward having the school and community become aware of your existence. Possibilities include

1. Picture and article in school and local newspaper.
2. Interview on school or local radio/television.
3. Recognition at awards assembly.
4. Picture in yearbook or student handbook.

SAMPLE INVITATION TO NONTRADITIONAL STUDENTS
(Use School Letterhead)

Dear (Student Name):

_____ School is interested in actively encouraging and supporting all students, such as yourself, who are in vocational education programs considered nontraditional for their sex.

I would like to invite you to attend a meeting on (date) at (time) in (place). At this meeting all nontraditional students in the school will come together for the purpose of forming a club or group. Membership will be voluntary, but I urge you to come to the first meeting and voice your opinions about the type of events and activities the group may have that would be helpful to you as a nontraditional student.

I will be the sponsor for the club and I look forward to seeing you at the first meeting. Please complete the form at the bottom and return it to me immediately in Room ___.

Sincerely,

(Group Sponsor's Name)

Please check one:

____ Yes, I'll be at the meeting

____ No, I'm not interested

____ Yes, I'm interested, but cannot attend the first meeting. Please let me know of the next meeting.

Name: _____ Home School/Room: _____

Vocational Program: _____

SAMPLE AGENDA - FIRST MEETING *

1. Welcome, and brief explanation of why this meeting is being held. (See introduction to this section for potential needs of nontraditional students). Have students tell their names and vocational area.

2. Get acquainted activity (Attachment 1-C).

3. Completion of student surveys (Attachment 1-D).

4. Film on nontraditional careers and discussion of film. (Attachment 1-F).

5. Report on tabulation of students' choice of meeting time, day and frequency (tabulate during film).

6. Date for the next meeting.

* Have name tags available and have students complete before the meeting begins.

WHO'S WHO: GET ACQUAINTED ACTIVITY

Purpose: To promote awareness of similarities and differences among students.

Directions: Have the students form a circle. Instruct the students that if a statement applies to them, step into the center of the circle. Allow time for participants to observe who else stepped in before reading another statement.

STATEMENTS

- I am a physically active person.
- When I was young, I played with Barbie Dolls.
- When I was young, I played with tools.
- I take out the trash.
- I like being a man/woman.
- Sometimes I lift weights.
- I know how to sew.
- I know how to put gas in a car and check the oil.
- I like to cook.
- I've played hopscotch.
- I've collected baseball cards.
- I'm teased about the classes I take.
- I mow the lawn.
- I clean the house.
- I've played football.
- I've been to a woman doctor.
- My mother has a career outside the home.
- My father cooks.
- I like math.
- I've changed a baby's diaper.
- I've used a power saw.
- I like to write poetry.
- I've cooked a meal.
- I've fixed a plug.
- I've had a paper route.
- I like to weld.
- I like being who I am.
- I haven't played a circle game since kindergarten.

Follow up this activity with a brief discussion of what students learned about each other.

INTEREST SURVEY FOR STUDENTS

Name _____ Grade _____

Home School _____ Homeroom # _____

Vocational Interest Area _____

Directions

Please circle your first choice and underline your second choice.

1. The best day for me to attend meetings is on . . .

   Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday

2. The best time for me to attend meetings is . . .

   Before School During School After School Evenings

3. I prefer to meet . . .

   Weekly Bimonthly Monthly

4. The part I like least about being one of the only boys/girls in my vocational education class is:

   _____

   _____

   _____

5. The part I like best about being one of the only girls/boys in my vocational education class is:

   _____

   _____

   _____

6. Who had the greatest influence on your selection of a vocational program?

____ School staff (identify who): _____
____ Parents (e.g., 4th grade teacher, math teacher, counselor, principal, coach, etc.)
____ Friends
____ Others (identify who): _____

7. Have you had any problems with teachers, counselors, parents, other students, employers or anyone else who does not think you should be in a nontraditional program?

____ yes ____ no

7(a). If yes, briefly explain what kinds of problems:

_____

_____

_____

8. What would you like to gain from membership in the group? (Check as many as you wish):

____ Support for my vocational class choices
____ Making new friends
____ Information on job opportunities
____ Acceptance as a nontraditional student
____ Opportunity to further develop my skill
____ Field trips to industries, businesses
____ Hearing from nontraditional adults in my field
____ Learning more about nontraditional careers through films, film strips
____ Ideas on how to handle some of the problems I have or might encounter
____ Other (please be specific): _____

9. Are you interested in becoming a member of this group?

____ yes ____ no ____ not sure at this time

Comments: _____

_____

_____

SAMPLE AGENDA - SECOND MEETING *

1. Roll call.
2. Pass out directory of members (taken from interest survey).
3. Discuss types of officers needed.
4. Nominations of officers.
5. Election of officers.
6. Discuss student responses to questions 5, 6, 7, and 8 on the student survey.
7. Report on tally of students' choices for the group's activities.
8. Discuss choices and how to set up programs for meeting them.

* Have name tags available and have students complete before the meeting begins.

Attachment 1-F

RECOMMENDED VIDEOTAPES

MIRROR, MIRROR

Mirror, Mirror depicts a female student discovering the importance of math and science as a means to achieving success in a nontraditional field. The video provides examples of actual women who broke away from traditional careers to pursue more lucrative options in male dominated fields. 1991, 10 minutes.

CREATING SUCCESS FOR BUSINESSES AND PEOPLE

This video addresses the needs of both employer and employee facing the challenges of building a diverse environment. Diversity is discussed as an enhancement to a company's competitive edge. Particularly useful are the vignettes and exercises that can be used independently to create awareness and stimulate discussion. 1993, 4 tapes @ 20 minutes

BOB'S MS ADVENTURE: SEXUAL HARASSMENT FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

This video creates awareness of th4e issues surrounding sexual harassment. Using the right mix of humor, dramatization, seriousness and illustration, this exceptional video makes a frank discussion of an often hidden problem. 1994, 26 minutes

MYTHBUSTERS I & II

Mythbusters I is an award winning video illustrating the popular misconceptions held regarding women in nontraditional occupations. Encouraging young women to examine careers in male dominated areas, the presentation attempts to debunk various stereotypes. 1989, 20 minutes

Mythbusters II is designed to broaden the career and educational aspirations of students in the upper elementary grades. This video provides an upbeat presentation of nontraditional careers for males and females. 1993, 20 minutes

SEXUAL HARASSMENT: MINIMIZE THE RISK

This video program was developed by the law offices of Mary Jo McGrath to assist and guide school districts as they deal with the issues of harassment and abuse. It includes information on how to conduct a sexual harassment investigation including sample forms. The program provides participants with tools to make decisions that are legally fit and educationally sound. 1993, 4 tapes @ 20 minutes

To borrow materials, please contact Pat Brancel at:

THE MICHIGAN CENTER FOR CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION
230 Erickson Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824
(800) 292-1606 or (517) 353-4397
FAX, (517) 432-2931

2 - TEAM SUPPORT SYSTEM

Abstract

The formation of teams of students by matching one student who has been successful in a vocational program with a student new to the same program. This packet contains information on training team leaders to identify problems and solutions, and to provide support and direction to the new student. This approach encourages support to the student within class as well as outside the actual program time.

Sponsor

Team Counselor

Participants

1. Vocational Education Teachers
2. Team Leader (experienced vocational student)
3. Team Member (new nontraditional vocational student)

Time Required to Initially Implement: Two months

Ongoing Time Required: Monthly follow-up meetings

Introduction

The Team Support System (T.S.S.) is designed to assist new students in making a smooth and comfortable transition into nontraditional vocational education programs. The activities are structured to provide for intervention and prevention of potential problems. Support teams are made up of two or more students. One team member who has been in the program long enough to be knowledgeable of the program requirements and procedures is designated as the leader. The leader may be a nontraditional or traditional student. Other team members are nontraditional students who have just entered the same vocational program as their leader. The team leaders are trained by the team counselor and work closely with the classroom teacher to provide support and to guide the new student(s) in adjusting to any difficulties they may encounter.

Implementation of a Team Support System will take approximately two months. Once the T.S.S. is in operation, it becomes ongoing with team leaders recruiting and training new team leaders.

The Role of the Team Counselor

The team counselor is an adult, preferably a guidance counselor, but can be any interested and qualified member of the staff, who expresses a desire to undertake the work and who has some experience as a group leader.

Duties of the Team Counselor

1. Hold a meeting for potential team leaders (Sample Invitation - Attachment 2-A).

2. Provide them with the following information:
   a. Summary of the need and purpose of T.S.S.
   b. Summary of the team leader duties (Attachment 2-B).
   c. Names of teachers, counselors, administrators, and the Title IX Coordinator who will help them.
   d. Information on Student Title IX Rights, and the School's student rights and responsibilities, policies and procedures. *
   e. Explanation of the student grievance procedure and the contact person identified in the grievance procedure.

* Copies of A Student Guide to Title IX are free upon request to the Office for Sex Equity.

3. Hand out student survey to all members (Attachment 2-C). Stress that it is not a test and the information they give is confidential.

4. Review the survey responses and identify problems common to most members of the group.

5. Make a clear statement of the problem. Lead the team leaders in a discussion to:

    a. Identify critical issues of the problem.
    b. Identify possible causes.
    c. Identify possible solutions.
    d. Analyze solutions for workability.
    e. Make a written list of the problems, solutions and what steps need to be taken by whom to alleviate the problems.

6. Share outcome of the team meetings with:

    a. Vocational teachers.
    b. All staff and administrators.
    c. Traditional students.

Once you feel that team leaders have a clear understanding of the information presented under Item 2, and that they have developed problem solving strategies by completing Item 5, you may begin the process of assigning them to work with new students. Regular follow-up meetings should be held to evaluate the success and to continue to resolve new problems as they arise.

<u>The Duties of the Vocational Teacher</u>

1. Choose a team leader from her/his class, selecting a student who:

    a. Has been in the program for at least three months.
    b. Demonstrates good work and academic skills.
    c. Is able to get along with teachers, peers, and students of the other sex.
    d. Uses good judgement.
    e. Is able to be assertive.
    f. Is able to direct others.
    g. Is willing to participate.

2. Provide a list of potential team leaders to the Team Coordinator.

3. Work with team leader to:
   a. Involve them in the classroom orientation procedure.
   b. Develop a way of using team leaders during open houses and program visitations by potential students.
   c. Support the new student.

4. Attend team leader meetings on occasion.

5. Promote support for the Team Support System among:
   a. Staff.
   b. Administration
   c. Traditional Students.

SAMPLE LETTER TO POTENTIAL TEAM LEADERS
(Use School Letterhead)

Dear (Student Name):

_____ School is interested in actively encouraging and supporting students who are in vocational education programs considered nontraditional for their sex. We are starting a new program called Team Support System, where experienced vocational students will assist teachers and counselors in giving support to students entering nontraditional vocational classes.

Your name has been given to me as a student who has been successful in a vocational education program, and who gets along well with teachers, peers, and classmates. There will be a meeting on (date) at (time) in (place) where vocational students will get together and help me organize and plan what we can do to help new students. At the end of the first meeting, you are free to choose whether or not you would like to be involved. Attached is a pass to excuse you from class.

I look forward to seeing you at the meeting. If you would like additional information, please feel free to see me in Room ____.

Sincerely,

(Team Coordinator's Name)

DUTIES OF THE TEAM LEADER

1. When a new nontraditional student enters the class, the team leader should:

   a. Meet and greet new student.

   b. Briefly explain Team Support System (if in place).

   c. Point out the location of restrooms, drinking fountains, changing areas, directions to cafeteria, pay telephone, etc.

   d. Assist the teacher in classroom orientation (as planned).
      - Introduce the student to your friends in class.
      - Show the location of tools and work stations.
      - If needed, assist with tool identification.
      - Review safety procedures and proper clothing.

   e. Establish rapport.
      - Sit with the new student.
      - Invite the new student to join you for break and/or lunch.
      - Provide moral support.

   f. Observe how the new student is being accepted into the program.
      - Watch for behaviors that could make for a bad situation between the new nontraditional student and the traditional students.
      - Make a note of what you observe and the results to discuss at the team leaders' meeting.
      - Be ready to ask the teacher to help the new student if the situation warrants it.

   g. Talk with new student at the end of class.
      - Ask how things are going.
      - Discreetly steer the conversation in the direction you think will be helpful to the new student.
      - Be an active listener.

2. Encourage new nontraditional students to come to group sessions after they have been in the program a while.

3. Invite teachers and traditional students to a group session.

   a. Help them understand some of the problems nontraditional students encounter.

   b. Encourage them to help develop solutions.

4. Be visible during visitation by potential students to the vocational area, or during open houses.

   a. Give brief explanation of Team Support System (if in place).

   b. Involve nontraditional student in the visitation.

5. Be visible during registration/orientation for incoming students.

STUDENT SURVEY

Directions

Please answer these questions only in relation to your experiences with your vocational classes.

1. As a student have you had any problems with students of the other sex? ____ yes ____ no

   1(a). If yes, what kind of problems? _____

   _____

   _____

2. As a student, have you had any problems with your teachers? ____ yes ____ no

   2(a). If yes, what kind of problems? _____

   _____

   _____

3. As a student, have you had any problems with your friends? ____ yes ____ no

   3(a). If yes, what kind of problems? _____

   _____

   _____

4. As a student, have you had any problems with your family? ____ yes ____ no

   4(a). If yes, what kind of problems? _____

   _____

   _____

5. As you look back, what kinds of help or support would have made these problems less difficult?

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. If you could give some advice to a new student entering class for the first time, what would that be?

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. Do you have any other suggestions or comments for helping new students adjust to vocational programs in which they will be considered the nontraditional student?

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. Are you male? ____ female? ____

3 - PEER COUNSELING

Abstract

A self-help program in which nontraditional students are trained to support and counsel other nontraditional students. The packet contains student surveys, meeting agendas, sample letters, and evaluations. This approach involves a facilitator who meets with students on a regular basis and guides them in developing the skills to solve their own problems.

Participants

1. Nontraditional Vocational Students
2. Facilitator/Adult Counselor

Time Required to Initially Implement: One month

Ongoing Time Required: Bimonthly meetings

Introduction

Peer counseling is essentially a self-help program in which nontraditional students are trained to support, counsel and advise other nontraditional students. The primary value of peer counseling lies in the opportunity it provides students to identify and work out solutions to their personal and social problems and to develop the self confidence necessary for professional success in nontraditional careers.

There are several good reasons why peer counseling is successful in providing support for nontraditional students:

- Students often feel that guidance counselors, school personnel, and parents cannot understand the nature and extent of their problems as well as another student in the same situation could.
- Students tend to feel more comfortable discussing their problems and the related feelings with their peers than with adults.
- Acceptance, reassurance, information, referral and support from others "in the same boat" tends to be more meaningful to the student.
- Students can develop the skills to solve their own problems.

This program is designed to operate during the school day. Ideally, the meetings could be lunch meetings, but the meetings should be scheduled so that no member of the group will miss the same class more than the equivalent of one class period a month. The frequency of meetings can be decided by the group. The minimum of twice a month is recommended in order to be effective.

The Role of the Facilitator/Adult Counselor

The adult facilitator for peer counseling is an adult, preferably a guidance counselor, but could be any interested and qualified member of the staff, who expresses a desire to undertake the work and who has some experience as a group leader. The primary function of the facilitator is to recruit and train peer counselors so that an active peer counseling program may be implemented. A secondary function of that person is his/her supervision of and input into the program to help maximize its potential for supporting nontraditional vocational students.

The role of the facilitator is not to act as a "go-between" in the student-teacher relationship or in the student-parent relationship, but rather to guide students in developing skills to identify problems, find solutions, make decisions, and find coping strategies for any of the personal problems they're encountering as a nontraditional student.

Steps to Implementing a Peer Counseling Program

1. Obtain the permission and support from the superintendent and building principal for the program. Include the following points in your discussion:

   a. The need for the program (number of students currently enrolled in nontraditional programs) and (if available) the number of students who in the past year or two have dropped out of a nontraditional program.
   b. The purpose of the peer counseling program.
   c. The value of the program.
   d. The meeting schedule.
   e. Importance of the superintendent communicating to all faculty members, explaining both the commitment of the school to comply with Title IX regulations and the need for an affirmative approach in vocational education.

2. Communicate with school personnel, especially the teaching staff, giving information on the operation of the peer counseling program (see Sample Memo - Attachment 3-A).

3. Identify meeting place, day and time.

4. Invite all identified nontraditional students to attend the first peer counseling group meeting (Sample Invitation - Attachment 3-B).

5. List the meeting in the daily bulletin and announce it during the morning announcements.

6. Conduct the first and subsequent meetings (Attachments 3-C, 3-D, and 3-E).

SAMPLE MEMO TO TEACHERS

TO: All Teachers

FROM: (Facilitator's Name)

DATE:

SUBJECT: Peer Counseling Group for Students in Nontraditional Programs

The first nontraditional student support group meeting will be held (date) at (time) in (place).

Every meeting will be held at varying times on different days to keep the interruption of academic class time to a minimum. Because membership in the group is voluntary, you will be provided with a list of members before (date).

All meetings will be listed on the staff calendar and announced in the daily bulletin and morning announcements. We would appreciate your cooperation in both releasing the students to attend these meetings and in not scheduling special projects or exams during meeting times. Students do not need passes to attend the meetings. However, attendance will be taken.

As far as I know, the following students are potential participants in the peer counseling group and must attend the first meeting.

Student	Grade	Student	Grade

You will be given a list of students who have elected to join. Thank you for your cooperation.

Attachment 3-B

SAMPLE LETTER TO NONTRADITIONAL STUDENTS
(Use School Letterhead)

Dear (Student's Name):

I would like to invite you to join a support group for students who are enrolled in nontraditional vocational education programs. In this group you will be brought together with other students to support one another by talking about what it is like to have made a nontraditional career choice.

Every meeting will be held at varying times on different days to keep interruptions of your academic classes to a minimum.

All students in nontraditional classes will attend the first meeting, after which time you will be allowed to choose if you want to become a regular member.

The first meeting has been scheduled for (date) at (time) in (place). Your teacher has a list of those students who will be attending and you will be excused from class. I look forward to seeing you at the meeting. If you would like additional information, please feel free to contact me in Room ____.

Sincerely,

(Facilitator's Name)

FIRST MEETING AGENDA *

Remember that the first few meetings will be the hardest to conduct because the group has not yet achieved a real sense of mutual trust.

1. Welcome and explanation of peer counseling group, including the purpose and operation procedure.

2. Ice breaker activity. Possibilities are:

   a. Introducing themselves and telling what nontraditional program they're in.
   b. Talking about a nickname they've had.
   c. Making a name tag with a symbol on it.

3. Hand out student survey for them to complete (Attachment 3-F). Stress that it is not a test, and that the information they give is confidential.

4. If time permits, have a group discussion on question #1.

5. Collect the surveys. **

6. Thank them for coming and announce the next meeting time.

* Have name tags available for students.

** Remember that you have promised teachers a list of those students who have decided to participate.

SECOND PEER COUNSELING MEETING

1. Divide the group into pairs (same gender if possible for this first pairing session).

2. Have them sit facing each other (somewhat separate from other pairs).

3. Give the following instructions to the students.

   > You have five minutes to tell the other person your name, what program you're in, how long you've been there, what you like and don't like about it and why you chose it, etc.

4. Have the group reassemble and sit in a large circle.

5. Have everyone take turns introducing his/her partner and giving a summary statement that includes information gathered in the above exercise.

6. Discuss likes and dislikes in preparation for making a list of any common themes.

SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS - OUTLINE

1. Assign or let the students select the person they want to co-counsel with.

2. Instruct that each person in the pair has (number) minutes to tell the other about recent experiences in vocational education classes, the pleasures, the disappointments, and most important - their feelings about each event.

   Remind them that the role of the listener is to only respond with understanding looks, gestures or information gathering responses such as "How did that make you feel?" or "Then what happened?", etc.

3. Reassemble and sit in a circle. Everyone should take a turn giving a summary statement about her/his partner's feelings and situations.

4. Ask for a volunteer recorder to write down information gathered in the next discussion (item #5).

5. Select a problem that is common to most members of the group and make a clear statement of the problem. Have students help:

   a. Identify critical issues of the problem.
   b. Identify possible causes of the problem.
   c. Identify possible solutions.
   d. Analyze solutions for workability.

Use the recorder's notes and remaining discussion items as starting points for the next meeting. When the group "takes off" and group members learn the process for coordinating the meetings, the facilitator should fade into the background. Let the students now assume the responsibility for discussions and brainstorming strategy sessions at each subsequent meeting.

At the end of the year, have the students complete the Peer Counseling Evaluation (Attachment 3-G). Use the results to structure the Peer Counseling Program for the next year.

NONTRADITIONAL STUDENT SURVEY

Directions

Complete the questions only in relation to your vocational classes.

1. Who had the greatest influence on your selection of a vocational program?

   ____ School staff (identify who): _____
   ____ Parents (e.g., 4th grade teacher, math teacher, counselor, principal, coach, etc.)
   ____ Friends
   ____ Others (identify who): _____

2. Have you had any problems with teachers, counselors, parents, students, employers or others who do not think you should be in a nontraditional program? ____ Yes ____ No

   2(a). If yes, explain briefly the kinds of problems:

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. Do you feel you had the appropriate background classes to prepare you to do the work in the vocational program when you first entered it? ____ Yes ____ No

4. Were you able to work as well as most of the students of the other sex? ____ Yes ____ No

5. How do your parents feel about your choice of a nontraditional vocational class?

   _____

   _____

   _____

6. Do you expect school officials to be helpful to you in finding a job placement? ____ Yes ____ No

7. Do you feel you are being treated fairly in class? ____ Yes ____ No

   7(a). If no, please explain further:

   _____

   _____

   _____

8. If you have had special difficulties in this program with other students (for example, not being able to keep up), have the teachers, counselors or others given you assistance in overcoming these difficulties? ____ Yes ____ No

   8(a). If yes, what kind of support or assistance have you received that has made participation in the program easier?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   8(b). If no, what kind of support or assistance would be helpful?

   _____

   _____

   _____

9. Are you interested in becoming a member of this support group? ____ Yes ____ No

10. Are you male? ____ female? ____

PEER COUNSELING PROGRAM: EVALUATION FOR STUDENTS

We'd like your opinions. Please answer the questions below. Thank you.

1. Did you benefit from being a member of the support group? ____ Yes ____ No

   1(a). Why or why not? _____

2. What did you like best about the group? _____

3. What, if anything, did you like the least? _____

4. What do you think we should do at meetings next year?

   ____ Have speakers
   ____ See films
   ____ Talk over problems/do peer counseling
   ____ Other (Please be specific): _____

5. Can you suggest any ways in which we can get the rest of the students enrolling in nontraditional vocational classes to come to the support group?

6. Do you have any other comments concerning the group?

7. What is your ... ____ Grade ____ Sex _____Voc. Area

4 - ADULT MENTOR/NONTRADITIONAL ROLE MODEL

Abstract

An approach which provides support for nontraditional students by linking them with nontraditional adult role models who are willing to serve as mentors to the students. This packet contains information on how to find role models, suggested interview questions and possible activities. This approach concentrates especially on supporting students who are struggling with the decision of whether or not to stay with their career/vocational class choices.

Participants

1. Nontraditional Students
2. Adults in Nontraditional Jobs/Careers

Time Required to Initially Implement: Two months

Ongoing Time Required: A minimum of three meetings/per year

Introduction

Students choose different role models to emulate and imitate. From teachers to rock stars, from parents to professional athletes, the search goes on to find different ways of being an adult. This identification process has a profound influence on a student's behavior, career choices, and image of self. A nontraditional student often feels isolated and experiences some anxiety about being in a situation where he/she feels like "the only one." One intervention to support student's choices in nontraditional vocational areas is to link the nontraditional student with a nontraditional adult role model who is willing to serve as a mentor to the student. This contact reinforces the student's choices by introducing her/him to an adult who is successfully doing what she/he wants to do in a nontraditional career area.

This approach involves a minimal time commitment and can provide very positive support for students. The material enclosed gives information on finding role models, suggestions for interview questions, and possible activities for mentors and students.

Securing Adult Role Models

1. Place an article in local newspaper (Attachment 4-A).

2. Poll the staff (Attachment 4-B).

3. Make a list of nontraditional students who graduated from your school in the past five years. The Director of Vocational Education, and staff in vocational education or the counseling department might know which students are still in the geographic area.

4. Compile a directory of role models from the information gathered above. Be sure to include their occupational area.

Activities for Mentors and Students

1. Have nontraditional students select someone from the directory who is working in the same or similar vocational/career area.

2. Use the list of suggested questions (Attachment 4-C) as starting points for interaction with the role model. The students may choose to develop their own questions. Encourage them to ask questions about not only what the role model <u>does</u>, but how these adults <u>feel</u> and how they support themselves psychologically through difficult situations.

3. Students may contact nontraditional role models in the following ways:

   a. Conducting a direct personal interview (Attachment 4-C).
   b. Conducting a telephone interview.
   c. Writing a letter.
   d. Making a questionnaire and mailing it.
   e. Requesting permission to visit their place of work.
   f. Inviting them to talk with the class, coming to an open house, and/or doing a demonstration for the class.
   g. Asking them to write an article on their nontraditional career or to be interviewed for the school newspaper.
   h. Inviting them to lunch at the school's food service cafeteria.
   I. Inviting them to participate in a Career Day/Fair.
   j. Requesting that they sit on a panel of nontraditional speakers.
   k. Asking them to participate in a video-tape students are making on nontraditional careers.
   l. Gathering their ideas or suggestions on how to complete a project on which students are working.

Follow Up the Interaction

After initial contact has been made, have the students write a thank you letter in which they emphasize what they've gained from the interaction. Have the students suggest to the mentor/role model that continuing to interact in a more informal manner (on the telephone or for coffee) would be interesting/beneficial/ important to the students.

Through discussions or worksheets, the students should consider all the ways in which they are similar to the role model contacted (Attachment 4-D - Discussion Questions). Remember that the greater the similarities, the greater the likelihood that the students will identify with the role model.

SAMPLE NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Wanted - Nontraditional Role Models

Career choices are changing for males and females. Many people now have jobs that were not traditionally held by members of their sex. For example, carpentry is a nontraditional occupation for women and nursing is nontraditional for men. In order to introduce students in _____ School to the expanding career options they now have, we are compiling a list of people who are now in nontraditional occupations and might serve as resources to students who are interested in a nontraditional career. If you are in a nontraditional job or know someone who is, please complete the form below, or call (name/telephone number).

_____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City and State: _____

Occupation: _____

Telephone Number: _____
Work Home

Return to: (Contact name in school district) _____

(Address) _____

Attachment 4-B

TO: All Staff

FROM:

RE: Nontraditional Adult Role Models

DATE:

Our building/district is involved in the first steps of a project which is designed to provide support and encouragement to students who are enrolled in vocational classes nontraditional for their sex. This project will link adults who are currently working in nontraditional jobs with students who have selected similar career/vocational goals. The first step of this project is to compile a list of adults in this geographic area who are now working in nontraditional careers/vocations.

If you know (or know of) an adult who is working in a nontraditional job, I would appreciate receiving the name of that individual(s). Providing me with this information in no way commits these persons to our project. Follow-up communication with these persons will explore their willingness to become involved in this project. Please fill out the information below and return it to me as soon as possible. Thank you.

Name of Individual: _____

Occupation/Job: _____

Employer's Name: _____

Individual's Address (if known): _____

Individuals Telephone # (if known): _____

Your name: _____

Return to (Name) _____

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS TO USE WITH NONTRADITIONAL ROLE MODELS

Job Activities

1. What type of daily activities are involved in your job?
2. What activities require most of your time?
3. What projects or activities are you working on currently?
4. Are most of your co-workers male? female? About equally male and female?
5. What are the average earnings of persons with jobs like yours?
6. What do you enjoy most about your occupation?
7. What do you like least about your occupation?

Occupational Decisions

1. How did you decide to become a _____?
2. What other occupations did you consider before deciding on this occupation? Why?
3. What job-related things do you expect to be doing in the future?
4. If you were starting over, would you make the same occupational decision? Why?

Occupational Problems

1. What are the primary problems that you face in your job?
2. What things have you found most helpful in meeting these problems?
3. Do you ever feel lonely or isolated from your co-workers? Why or why not?
4. What were some of the fears you had to overcome?
5. How did you overcome these fears?

Occupational Future

1. What future developments do you see for persons who are in your occupation? Will jobs be available?
2. What advice would you give someone like me who may be interested in the occupation?
3. Would you give me the same advice if I were the other sex?

Try It, You'll Like It, A Student Guide to Nonsexist Vocational Education, National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, Washington, D.C.

DISCUSSION/WORKSHEET QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

1. List all the characteristics of the person you interviewed that you really liked:

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

2. Place a check by the characteristics that are also true of you.

3. Which of the qualities would you like to develop?

_____

_____

_____

4. How can you begin to develop them?

_____

_____

_____

5. What other people that you know have these special qualities?

_____

_____

_____

6. Do you believe there are <u>advantages</u> to working in a nontraditional job or career? If so, what?

_____

_____

_____

7. Do you believe there are <u>disadvantages</u> to working in a nontraditional job or career? If so, what?

_____

_____

_____

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